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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION 10-15

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 AID-07 INR-10 EUR-12 AF-10 CIAE-00
EA-10 NEA-06 ARA-16 NSAE-00 HA-06 L-03 PA-01
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MESCO

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: UNESCO, AF, PK, TH, CB
SUBJ: UNESCO: EXECUTIVE BOARD DEBATE ON ASSISTANCE
TO REFUGEES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1. SUMMARY: THE PROGRAM AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE DEBATED ITEM 7.2 OF THE AGENDA DEALING WITH
THIS TOPIC ON MAY 13. THE DEBATE REVEALED LITTLE THAT
WAS NEW OR UNEXPECTED. THE SOVIET BLOC SAID NOTHING,
AND THE VIET-NAM MEMBER BROUGHT THE DEBATE TO A CLOSE
ON A RATHER SURPRISING NOTE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PAKISTAN DEL OPENED THE DEBATE WITH A COMPRE-
HENSIVE AND DETAILED SURVEY OF THE SCALE OF THE AFGHAN
REFUGEE PROBLEM, LIBERALLY INTERLARDERD WITH FORCEFUL
DENUNCIATIONS OF THE "NAKED MILITARY AGGRESSION
AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN BY A NEIGHBORING
POWER." OTHER DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING CHINA AND THE
U.S., FOCUSSED ON THE NEED FOR HELP FROM THE INTERNA-
TIONAL COMMUNITY AND ON UNESCO'S ROLE. THE SOVIET AND
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EAST EUROPEAN DELS KEPT ABSOLUTELY QUIET.

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3. THE US DEL REFERRED TO OUR LONGTIME CONCERN WITH REFUGEE PROBLEMS AND ASSERTED OUR VIEW THAT UNESCO SHOULD PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE. REFERRING TO THE SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT, 114 EX/28, THE US DEL URGED THAT UNESCO'S EFFORTS "SHOULD BE PRACTICAL AND TANGIBLE RATHER THAN THEORETICAL." THE U.S. SUPPORTS THE PROVISION OF SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY CENTERS, BUT "WE BELIEVE THE MOST URGENT NEEDS ARE EVEN MORE BASIC: SCHOOLBOOKS, PENCILS, PAPER AND BLACKBOARDS." THE US DEL FURTHER STATED THAT WE REGARD THE PREPARATION OF MATERIALS FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING ON REFUGEE RIGHTS AS "SOMEWHAT ABSTRACT."

4. THE THAILAND DEL DESCRIBED THE KHMER REFUGEE PROBLEM IN LANGUAGE SIMILAR, BUT LOWER IN KEY, TO THAT USED BY THE PAKISTAN DEL. THERE WAS NO RESPONSE FROM THE OTHER SIDE. FINALLY, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA, NOT A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, ASKED PERMISSION TO SPEAK. HIS LENGTHY REMARKS ROUGHLY PARALLELED THOSE OF THE PAKISTAN DEL.

5. WHEN THE DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEAN SPEAKER CONCLUDED, THE VIET-NAM DEL DEMANDED THE FLOOR. HE SAID HE HAD "LISTENED PATIENTLY" TO THE DEBATE AND WAS COMPELLED TO MAKE TWO POINTS. FIRST, HE SAID, HIS GOVERNMENT WISHED TO EXPRESS ITS GRATITUDE TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND AND TO THE MANY OTHER NATIONS INVOLVED IN ASSISTING WITH THE PROBLEMS OF REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA. SECOND, HE WISHED TO REEMPHASIZE A POINT HE HAD MADE ON "SEVERAL OCCASIONS":

"THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IS A HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM, AND
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UNESCO SHOULD APPROACH IT FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE. IF YOU WISH TO DEBATE THE POLITICAL ASPECTS, WE SHOULD DO THAT IN THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IF THERE IS ANY PLACE WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO DEBATE (THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM) IT IS THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IT IS NOT UNESCO."

6. THIS ENDED THE DEBATE ON UNESCO ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HOWEVER, THE VIET-NAM DEL CAME BACK TO IT IN A RAMBLING INTERVENTION REGARDING

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SPIN II. HAVING LED HIMSELF OFF THE MAIN TOPIC TO THE QUESTION OF "BRAIN DRAIN" THE VIET-NAM DEL SAID THAT WE HAD TO RECOGNIZE THAT REFUGEES REPRESENTED A "TERRIBLE BRAIN DRAIN" TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, SINCE IT WAS GENERALLY THE MOST EDUCATED AND CAPABLE PEOPLE WHO LEFT THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AS REFUGEES "EITHER FOR ECONOMIC REASONS OR REASONS OF BELIEF." GERARD

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